

## WHAT IS A CARE CONFERENCE?

A care conference is a meeting during which you discuss your care plan with the facility staff. It is common to invite family members or representatives as well. You can also invite your local long-term care ombudsman. A care plan is a roadmap for your care while you are living in a nursing home or assisted living. It includes your needs, your goals, and how your care team will help meet those goals.

## WHEN SHOULD YOU HAVE A CARE CONFERENCE?

The frequency of care planning meetings is dependent both on the level of care provided (i.e. nursing home versus assisted living) and the policies of the specific facility where the resident lives.

- Upon admission - the facility must develop a base-line care plan within 48 hours of the resident's admission. The comprehensive care plan must be developed within 7 days of admission.
- In a nursing home - quarterly (once every 3 months) and whenever the resident has a major change in condition.
- In assisted living - yearly (once every 12 months) and whenever the resident has a major change in condition.

You can request a care conference when your needs change or if you feel you are not receiving good quality of care - you do not need to wait for your next scheduled conference.

## WHO SHOULD ATTEND A CARE CONFERENCE?

The most important person at a care conference is you, the resident. The conference will also include facility staff, and if requested, family, your representative, or a long-term care ombudsman. If there is someone you want to attend who can't be there in person, the facility should arrange for them to attend via phone or video call.

## HOW CAN YOU ADVOCATE FOR YOUR WANTS AND NEEDS DURING A CARE CONFERENCE?

1. **Know your rights.** You have the legal right to be at every care conference; staff or family members cannot request a care conference without you present.
2. **Prepare a list of goals and preferences using the following categories:** medical care, nursing/personal care, social services, mental health, rehabilitation, dietary, and activities.
  - a. Example: you like to spend your evenings alone. You can request that the activities director does not knock and invite you to evening activities.
  - b. Example: the facility defaults to providing two showers per week, but you would prefer three. You can request an additional weekly shower.
  - c. Example: you are struggling with the transition from living in a private home to living in a nursing home. You can request to meet with the facility's social worker to discuss your emotional well-being during the adjustment process.
3. **Ask questions.** As the care conference unfolds, members of the care team might not fully explain everything. Do not hesitate to ask questions. If it's helpful, ask your family/representatives to ask questions. Someone else may think of something important to ask.
4. **Request a copy of your care plan and review it for accuracy.** The facility is required to provide you a copy of your care plan. Check to see if they missed anything or wrote anything incorrectly. Keep a list of questions about anything you don't understand.

Remember that the conference is about your day-to-day living - your voice is the most important one in the room. It's good to be assertive.

## HOW CAN A LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN HELP?

Is the facility not honoring your care plan? Do you feel it needs to change but you can't get them to schedule a care conference? These and other problems may arise. Your ombudsman can advocate for you to make sure you're getting the care you want and deserve.

Contact your local **Boulder County Long-Term Care Ombudsman at 303-441-1173**. They will help everyone involved find a solution that respects the resident's wishes. No matter what, the ombudsman is there to advocate for you.

Federal regulations governing long-term care resident rights in the US Code of Federal Regulations at 42 CFR § 483.

State of Colorado regulations governing assisted living resident rights can be found in the Colorado Code of Regulations at 6 CCR 1011-1 Chapter 7.